



ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

THE MARQUIS DE BOUTHILLIER-CHAVIGNY

BEFORE THE

IMPERIAL INSTITUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN

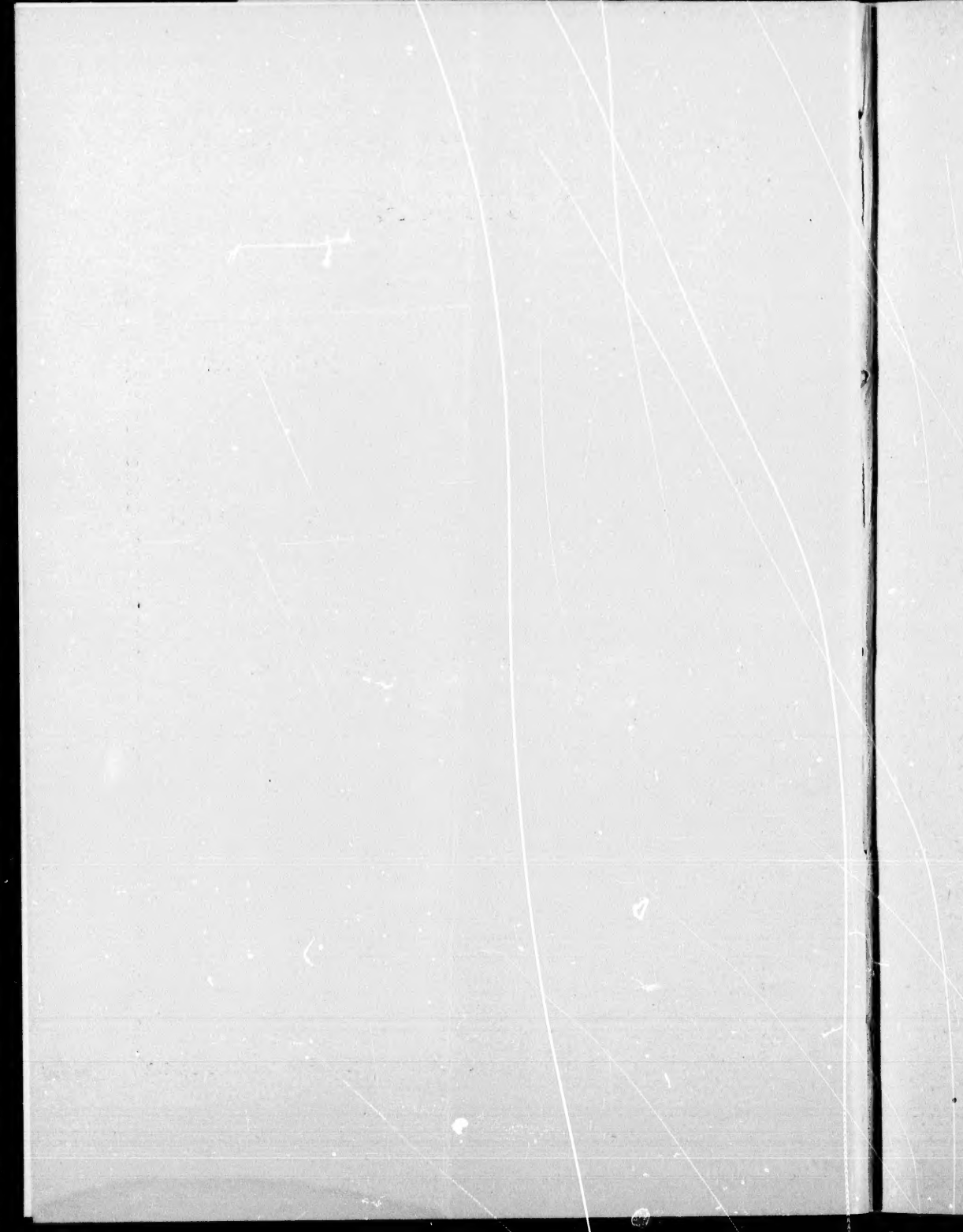
ON THE

10TH OF MARCH, 1898.

CHAIRMAN : L. J. SARGEANT.

MONTREAL :
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BRITAIN, 10TH MARCH, 1898.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It affords me great pleasure to appear, for the first time in my life, before an English audience, and especially having as the subject of my lecture one of your greatest colonies.

Born a Frenchman, I have been living in Canada for fifteen years, and let me add at once, that in Canada I found all the happiness that a man can expect in this world.

I do not intend this evening to describe to you that immense country, that you all know so well, especially since the great Jubilee, when you received with so much honour, our present Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier.

You will admit with me, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the fact of my presence here this evening is, perhaps, the very best proof of the fairness and freedom which governs all the colonies of the Empire.

As a result of those laws, I, a Frenchman, may claim the very great honour of acting as a true Canadian, which I am, and which means, a devoted subject of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, in Canada.

When I offered to the High Commissioner for Canada, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, to deliver a lecture at the Imperial Institute, I had an object in view.

It has always been my claim that after the good work made in Europe by all the Canadian agents to make our country known as it deserves to be, a good aim would be attained, if all enthusiastic fellow-Canadians like myself took advantage of their visit to the Mother Country to let the British public have their ideas and opinions of this colony.

I have but one desire this evening, and that is to give you, being a settler myself, a few practical statements which would be useful to intending emigrants.

In fact, this question of emigration is a vital and delicate one, since thereon depends the happiness of thousands of individuals who from year to year exile themselves in search of it.

To realize the nature and extent of the progress, and to appreciate the prodigious economic development of the Dominion one has only to do as I did, and to set out for the Canadian North-West.

It was my very good fortune to take this trip more than once, and each time it has been to me a new revelation. On my way from Montreal to the Rocky Mountains, I learned everywhere what *will* can accomplish when it is governed by practical intelligence and a lofty sense of patriotism. In Manitoba, and all through the Territories, I ascertained what grand results this patriotism had achieved. The work to which these results are due is life-giving in its energy. To-day, it is the honour, and to-morrow it will be the safeguard of those young countries.

To have a just idea of the progress achieved in the provinces of Western Canada in recent years, it will be

well to look back and see what their condition was twenty years ago.

In 1878 the confederation of the North American Colonies was a little more than eleven years old. All the living forces, all the energies, formerly scattered without any bond of common interest over a territory as large as that of Europe, were now rallied round a single flag, that of the Dominion, and still, notwithstanding the energy of its people and the good will of its political leaders, Canada was, at this time, on the point of seeing its future very near being compromised. An economic crisis of deep significance affected all parts of the country. The causes of this unhappy situation were numerous. One of them exceeded in gravity any of the others. Neither life nor progress had as yet penetrated the solitude of the Great West to develop for the benefit of the whole community the immense wealth that nature had lavished on that part of the Dominion.

All over this fertile prairie we should have found in 1878 but the missionaries' tent, the trappers' hut and the Indians' wigwams, those itinerant habitations which for more than two centuries have travelled in company through the great plains of North America. In fact the whole Dominion overflowed with natural wealth. The soil was of a surprising fertility, the population was sprung from two of the most highly gifted and most enterprising races in the world, and still, notwithstanding all these advantages, the country was declining. Why? Simply because the East and the West of these immense colonies were still without any direct means of communication with each other.

Under penalty of seeing the great work of Confederation undone, it was essential that all the energy, all the resources of the country should be concentrated on the completion of the transcontinental railway. It was necessary, in a word, to awaken in the nation the consciousness of its power and to revive on the markets of Europe Canada's credit.

You all know, Ladies and Gentlemen, how this heavy charge of responsibility was gladly accepted by Sir John A. Macdonald and his colleagues, and how resolutely they worked from the very day of their advent to power to effect the economic resurrection of the country.

Inspired by the highest sense of patriotism, they pushed forward.

Boldness when combined with genius has rarely failed. That illustrious man, Sir John A. Macdonald, was not deceived in his plans and forecasts.

The most critical duty that fell to his lot was to find men who would accept the tremendous task of constructing the railway which was to be the keystone of the Confederation and who would take all risks connected with it.

As you know, these men were found ; and here I will ask you to add to Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier's names other names, like those of Lord Mount Stephens, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, Sir William Van Horne, to whom is due in the fullest sense of the word the actual prosperity of the greatest of all English colonies, our Dominion of Canada.

Is it necessary for me to show you the results of the work accomplished by these great and true Canadians ?

A territory as large as that of Europe has been opened to life, civilization and progress. In fact life is swarming right and left of that immense Canadian Pacific Railway. Towns have sprung up all over the country between the Great Lakes and the Pacific Coast. Millions of acres of land are in full cultivation. A trade amounting to nearly one hundred million dollars has been created between the Eastern Provinces and their Western sisters. The exports of Canadian produce, which, twenty-five years ago, were inferior by fifteen million dollars to the imports, exceeded in 1895 the imports by three million dollars, and last but not least, Canada can boast of possessing, to-day, the surest strategical road of the Empire, which will be to-morrow the great commercial route of the world.

As I told you, my principal object this evening is to make a few remarks about the Canadian North-West, as a field of emigration, and more especially to make a few remarks that will help emigrants in the future.

It must not be forgotten that notwithstanding the immense wealth Canada has reserved in her mines, forests and fisheries the future of the country *entirely depends* on her immense agricultural possibilities. I repeat again that this fact must not be forgotten.

The Canadian North-West and the province of Manitoba, which is geographically part of it, constitutes a field of emigration without rival in the world. This field is immense, being in extent equal to the half of Europe.

If twenty millions of people took possession of the soil from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains there would still be scope for emigration for years to come. By one

of those marvellous coincidences of which Providence alone has the secret, Canada opens the doors of its half-Continent of territory to colonization and progress just at the moment when an economic crisis of the gravest character is embarrassing the nations of Europe. Just when the landed proprietors of the old world are abandoning the cultivation of the soil, through discouragement, and the rivalry from over the sea encountered in their own markets, just when the agricultural population of Europe is deserting the country to flock to the town, there arises in the fulness of its vigour a young country, whose soil has for ages been holding in reserve its life-giving sap, where nature has laid up treasures inestimable and where the land, marvellously fruitful, can be obtained at a merely nominal price.

In travelling through the North-West my principal occupation was to converse with emigrants.

In fact the remarks which I wish to put before you are the result of these conversations. In giving them to you I feel that I will do more good to Canada than by giving you a mere description of the country.

Well, I learned that with some of these emigrants success meant a well-filled purse. This is an error which the true friends of colonization should not hesitate to fight.

The determination not to be discouraged by any obstacle, the resolve, firmly taken, to conform to the usage of the country in which they have made their home, in these qualities, rather than in quickly won gold, lies the future prosperity of the emigrant.

Whether he be the son of an humble artisan, or a

scion of nobility, the settler should bear in mind that money may facilitate his enterprises, but only in energy and ability will he find the key to sure success.

I cannot repeat too much, that everyone who goes West with good health and with a fair stock of good will can find work from day to day at all seasons of the year.

The newly arrived emigrant must not restrict his energies to any one class of work. He must simply accept with good will whatever work is offered him, whether it is in exact accord with his tastes or not. The opportunity will in time present itself of finding a better place, if he is intelligent, saving and sober.

In the West the workman soon gets to be known, and then, while he is not dreaming of it, he is observed and studied by men who, if he is deserving, will soon ascertain it and make him good offers.

The field of business in the West is a neutral ground, on which men of social conditions apparently the most opposite may elbow each other.

Over there the youngest son of an English peer may become the partner of an humble plebeian, whom the contact with aristocracy neither surprises nor frightens.

The great law of the struggle for life levels all distinction of origin, and those who refuse to bow the head before this law, condemn themselves to helplessness even if they do not expose themselves to ridicule.

Let all young men remember that in our West the first condition of success is to leave far behind the spirit of caste and to attain the conviction that work alone will be the umpire of merit and consideration.

This equality joined with the principle of fair play innate in every true born Briton, has one result, which every impartial traveller will acknowledge. It shuts the door against mean jealousies which in many communities constitute an impassable barrier to progress.

Wherever I went in the North-West, I never once found rivalries or hatreds existing between settlers or merchants. Every one tries to do better than his neighbour, to surpass him if he can, but never does this competition transgress the bounds of courtesy and justice.

During my stay in Manitoba, I gave much attention to the position of the emigrants arriving in the country with no other fortune than that which they owed to the vigour of their arms and the strength of their will; and the conclusion forced on me is, that they never failed to find work—remunerative work which enabled them, in a couple of years or so, to realize the longing of their hearts and to become proprietors.

I do not fear, moreover, to affirm that of all the settlers that I met, the most prosperous were exactly those who had begun their career in the service of others.

The immigrant who is determined to work and who hires himself for a few years before setting up an establishment of his own has an advantage over his wealthy companion who can only begin his new career by more or less expensive experiments. While making money he is winning an experience which will be of the utmost value when he becomes his own master.

Above all the immigrant must be a man of stability, and not to be turned aside from his purpose.

He must be observant and study the country from which he expects to derive a livelihood, and perhaps the status of a man of wealth. He must assimilate himself to the usage of the community in which his lot is cast, and never forget that every *dollar spent needlessly goes to retard him in his advance to independence.*

Finally, his motto should be "Perseverance, Industry and Economy."

Every year a crowd of young men go to the North-West expecting to make their fortune. Most of them have a little money; many of them, more than is good. My advice to these young men, whatever may have been their social position before, however well stocked their purse is, is to imitate without the least hesitation, for a time at least, the emigrants of whom I have already spoken. Once on the prairie let them forget the past, or only recall it to derive courage from it to conquer the future. Let them avoid surrounding themselves with helpers when they have started in earnest as farmers, but learn to depend on themselves in tending the soil that is to enrich them. *This will pay better than beginning by having a good time.*

In the West, the only social distinctions are those which are based on industry and success, and it is foolish to ignore this fact.

But it is not to the settler only that the Canadian Northwest offers a field of fruitful endeavour. It also places within reach of the European capitalists opportunities for investment that are practically limitless.

In this connection it is important to bear in mind that an economic evolution has just begun, the origin of

which is to be looked for in that two-fold movement disclosed on the one hand by the progressive depreciation of land in Europe, and on the other by its constant rise in value in the New World, and especially in the new provinces of Canada.

While in Europe land is almost everywhere exhausted and can supply men's needs only when it is artificially revived, in Canada more than 150,000,000 acres of black loam, the fructifying properties of which half a century of culture could not exhaust, are to be had at a merely nominal price. While at this moment a third of the land property in Europe is allowed to lie waste, every year, hundreds of thousands of acres are on our side of the Atlantic opened to cultivation.

The day is not far distant, therefore, when the European farmer, seeing the circle of operations gradually contracting around him, will realize that every stroke of the spade given by the Canadian settler in the prairie, deepens the abyss of ruin towards which he is inevitably drawn.

The continental powers of Europe are not insensible to this state of things, and some of them have summoned to their aid protection in all its forms. But though this policy may palliate the evil, it brings no permanent remedy. A custom tariff can no more restore its vigour to the exhausted soil than it can prove a defective barrier to produce, the cost of which in its native home tends to constantly diminish.

For the European producers the only way to protect themselves is to turn to their own profit the economic crisis that threatens them.

To that end let them extend their radius of action and entrench themselves in the centre of the outside competition which they find so ruinous.

In other words let the great landed proprietor of Europe take his place as a New World producer.

That this transformation is not impossible is quite clear from what Britishers have already accomplished all over the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the course of this lecture I have been discharging a duty, and I have now to excuse myself for having been so tedious, but as you know more often than not, pleasure does not accord with duty.

Let me tell you how proud I am to feel that I am the first man of my nationality who dares to come into this Imperial Institute and acknowledge publicly the greatness of Britain's Colonial possessions, and the fairness with which any settler is received, accepted and protected, without distinction of race or creed.

In acquitting myself of the task I proposed coming here for, I paid a debt of gratitude to the country which yielded me so many great lessons of perseverance, energy and patriotism.

Let me hope in finishing that I have rendered a service to that great young country of mine for which Providence has prepared destinies second to none on the American continent.